



# Harper's



## PALMS

Palms are quite important in the Landscape, they are used indoors, in patio pots, and in general outdoor settings. They are used to lend a tropical feeling. In the xeriscape garden, they are used in mini-oasis plantings and are valuable around pools and ponds, even fast growing varieties can be controlled when containerized. Palms range in hardiness from very tender to both heat and cold, to extremely hardy to both heat and cold. They range in size from quite small to some varieties that will grow to be 100' tall, some grow with multiple trunks and some grow with a single trunk. The growth tip in a Palm starts down the trunk about as far inside the trunk as the frond is long.

Palms are found growing in nature in riparian areas or wet spots, however this does not mean they want to be wet all the time. Most palms respond to rich organic type soils and respond to heavy infrequent watering programs as well as fertilizing. The Palms that are in their native habitat of wet areas tend to have soils that drain well and do not become water logged.

### Planting Palms in our Desert Soils:

When planting Palms, add compost to the soil at a ratio of 50% Compost to 50% native soil and the planting hole need not be deeper than the rootball, unless the soil does not drain well, but it needs to be from 2 to 4 times as wide as the rootball. If your soil does not drain well, dig the hole somewhat deeper than the rootball and then replace the soil without amending it and compact it with your feet. This will allow water to drain away from the rootball but will not settle.

### Irrigation & Fertilization

Irrigation of palms is critical, they need large amounts of water at each watering but do not need to remain wet. Shallow frequent watering of Palms Trees as with most plants, leads to serious problems.

Fertilizing of the Palm Tree corresponds to fertilizing of other trees and shrubs. We recommend 3 feedings per year. *See Harper's care sheet on Fertilizing.*

If you are watering correctly and fertilizing on schedule, there should be no trace mineral problems. However, if abnormal growth starts in the Palm and yellowing occurs, use a product that has Magnesium, Iron, Manganese, Zinc and Sulfur in it, such as Palm Tree Food or Disper Sol. Use as directed and make sure you correct the watering on the Palm.

## Insects

Insects are not a large problem on Palms grown outdoors. Some of the Tropical Indoor Palms are subject to Mite and Mealy Bug damage. If the plant looks strange or you have critters on it, bring in to us for proper identification and recommended treatments.

## Fungus

We do see some fungus problems in Palms. Budrot and Footrot as well as rots that occur from damage to the trunk as in climbing the tree with spikes to trim it. Budrot is treatable with Bordeaux, the symptoms of this are not unlike trace mineral shortage symptoms and are sometimes mistaken for the other as they both can cause mishappen growth in the growth tip of the Palm. Ask us for specifics.

## Trimming

Trimming leaves off of a palm does not make the tree grow faster. Foliage should be left on the tree until the leaf starts to die back, at that time, it can be removed for a better groomed look. Palms trimmed about the middle of June allow one to remove flowering stalks, immature seed, and older fronds at one time. This should only have to be done once a year.

When removing fronds, you should cut the frond off as close to the trunk as possible so as not to leave a long stub. Sometimes two cuts are made across the green Petioles so they will later loosen and shed themselves or for easy removal later. Never cut into the green trunk. When skinning some Palms, or removing the old leaf Petioles, never go higher on the trunk than the brown area on the trunk to avoid getting into the green tissue.

The use of climbing spikes should be avoided if possible because the holes they leave in the trunk could become sites for decay.

The bottom line is, we trim to make the tree look better to us, trimming or the lack of trimming has no effect on the growth of the tree.

